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## Does person-organization fit moderate the effects of affective commitment and job satisfaction on turnover intentions?

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### Abstract

P-O fit is the congruence between the norms and values of organizations and the values of its employees. Among other factors, the extent of congruence between the values and norms of an employee, to that of the organization he works for, may influence important work outcomes such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. This study examines the moderating effect of person-organization fit on the relationships between affective organizational commitment, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Research hypotheses are tested with the data from a convenient sample of 200 employees working at higher education institutions in Turkey. Analyses revealed that the level of person – organization fit significantly moderates the effects of job satisfaction on turnover intentions. However, no such effect is observed on the relationship between affective organizational commitment and turnover intention. Theoretical and managerial implications of the findings are discussed.

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Keywords: Person-organization fit, work values, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, turnover intentions

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### 1. Introduction

In today's competitive business world, firms' ability to attract, recruit and retain talented employees has become a strategic component of corporate success. Finding the right person for the job is an important task to be filled by the human resources professionals. From the employee's perspective, the right job and the right organization is crucial to achieving a higher quality of work life. Hence, person-organization fit is an important concept both for employees and recruiters and can be broadly defined as the compatibility between employees and the organizations. A good fit between organization and employee is important, especially when considering the impact of work-related factors such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee turnover which are important work outcomes for competitive advantage. Extant literature reports a plethora of evidence indicating that job satisfaction and organizational commitment increase employee retention and minimize turnover intentions. However, research examining the impact of P-O fit on the relationship between job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intentions are relatively scarce. Accordingly, in this study, we tried to respond to this shortcoming by probing the moderating effect of P-O fit on the effects of affective organizational commitment and job satisfaction on turnover intentions within a Turkish sample. For this aim, we conducted a field research by using the survey methodology on a sample consisted of employed respondents working in the higher education sector. This study aims to add the current HRM literature by investigating the moderating effect of P-O fit on the relationship between affective organizational

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commitment, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Research results may provide important insights for HRM practitioners about the importance of P-O fit on employee outcomes, as well.

## 2. Literature Review And Hypotheses

This paper investigates the moderating effect of person-organization fit on the relationships between job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intentions. Thus, a literature review on each of the study variables is provided below.

### 2.1. Person-Organization Fit

Person-organization (P-O) fit has been defined in various ways as value congruence, goal congruence, the match between employees' needs and reinforces available in the work environment, and the match between the personality of the individual and the characteristics of the organization (Chatman, 1991; McCulloch & Turban, 2007). Chatman (1989) defined P-O fit as the congruence between the norms and values of organizations and the values of persons. This definition refers to a value-based congruence between employee and the organization. P-O fit pertains to how an individual matches an organization's values, goals, and mission (Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001, 455). According to the literature, high P-O fit means more successful and competitive organizations and employees. (Boxx et al., 1991; Chatman, 1989, 1991; Meglino et al., 1989; O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991). There are many positive effects of high congruence between person and organization both for employees and organizations. A greater degree of P-O fit has been shown to be related to multiple organizational outcomes including enhanced organizational commitment, increased productivity, and reduced turnover (Van Vianen, 2000). Further, it has been suggested that the relationship between P-O fit and turnover intent is mediated by the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Westerman & Cyr, 2004). Tepeci and Barlett (2002) found that the more values consistency employees perceive with their organization, the more satisfaction employees experience from their jobs. In addition, O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) found that congruence between individual and organizational values predicted a higher likelihood of extra-role behaviors, such as individuals pledging money to a university or helping others, even when it was not required by their formal job descriptions. However, there still exist gaps in the literature about the impact of P-O fit on other work related issues such as work values.

### 2.2. Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is defined as the extent to which one identifies with and is involved in an organization. It is also conceptualized as an acceptance and internalization of organization's goals, a willingness to work hard to achieve those goals, and the desire to stay with the organization. Meyer and Allen (1991) state that organizational commitment is "a psychological state that a) characterizes the employee's relationships with the organization, and b) has implications for the decision to continue membership in the organization" (p. 67). According to Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974), commitment is a 'strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a definite desire to maintain organizational membership' (p. 604). Meyer & Allen (1991) argued that there were three types of organizational commitment: (a) Affective Commitment: refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement with the organization. Employees with a strong affective commitment continue employment with the organization because they want to do so. (b) Continuance Commitment refers to an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization. Employees whose primary link to the organization is based on continuance commitment remain because they need to do so. (c) Normative Commitment reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment. Employees with a high level of normative commitment feel that they ought to remain with the organization. Although affective, continuance, and normative commitment are used to capture the multidimensional nature of organizational commitment, affective commitment is considered a more effective measurement of organizational commitment. Employees with strong affective commitment would be motivated to higher levels of performance and make more meaningful contributions than employees who expressed continuance or normative commitment. Accordingly, in this study we examined the relationship between turnover intentions and the affective dimension of organizational commitment. Affective commitment is a psychological state that binds an individual to an organization. Committed

employees are willing to go beyond the minimum requirements of their duties and are more likely to remain with the organization than uncommitted employees (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

## 2.2. Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is the most widely investigated job attitude as well as one of the most extensively researched subjects in the HRM and organizational behavior fields (Judge & Church, 2000). Job Satisfaction can be shortly defined as “the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs (Spector, 1997). The most widely accepted explanation of job satisfaction was presented by Locke (1976), who defined job satisfaction as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences. It represents a combination of positive or negative feelings that workers have towards their work. It is influenced by a series of factors including the nature of work, salary, advancement opportunities, management, work groups, work conditions and the congruence between the person and the organization. It is considered as one of the main factors when it comes to efficiency and effectiveness of business organizations. Job satisfaction is an important predictor of employees’ intention to stay or leave the organization. If the employee is dissatisfied with his work, he is likely to leave the organization. Further, lack of job satisfaction may cause a low level of productivity and a higher level of absenteeism, occupational accidents, mental and physical health problems and early retirements. HRM and organizational behavior literature provides a plethora of empirical evidence showing that job satisfaction is significantly negatively related to intentions to leave an organization (Chen & Spector, 1992) and turnover intentions (Rusbult & Farrell, 1983; Coomer & Barriball, 2007). In a meta-analysis, Hellman (1997) showed that the relationship between job satisfaction and intent to leave was significant and consistently negative. Increasing job satisfaction subsequently decreases the likelihood of employee turnover (Price and Mueller, 1981; Cavanagh and Coffin, 1992).

## 2.3. Turnover Intention

Turnover intention may be defined as the intention of employees to quit their organization. There are some other terms used interchangeably with turnover, such as quits, attrition, exits, mobility, migration or succession. Price (1977) has defined “turnover” as the ratio of the number of organizational members who have left during the period being considered divided by the average number of people in that organization during the period. It is also defined as the reflection of “the (subjective) probability that an individual will change his or her job within a certain time period” (Sousa-Poza&Henneberger, 2004) and is an immediate precursor to actual turnover. It is also defined as the mediating factor between attitudes affecting intent to quit and actually quitting an organization (Glissmeyer, Bishop, & Fass, 2008). There is a wide range of empirical evidence in the current literature showing that turnover intention of an employee is negatively influenced by job satisfaction and his commitment to the organization. However, the direct relationships between turnover intention, job satisfaction and organizational commitment may be moderated by the level of fit between the employee and the organization he works for. On that account, we conducted a research in order to probe the relationships between these variables. Next section provides the research methodology, data analyses and results.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research Goal

The main objective of this study is examining the moderating role of perceived person-organization fit on the effects of affective organizational commitment and job satisfaction on turnover intentions.

### 3.2. Research Hypotheses

Based on the previous findings of the relevant literature, we proposed the following hypotheses:

*H1: There is a significantly negative relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention.*

*H2: There is a significantly negative relationship between affective commitment and turnover intention.*

*H3: Perceived person-organization fit moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention.*

*H4: Perceived person-organization fit moderates the relationship between affective commitment and turnover intention.*

### 3.3. Research Model

The following diagram shows the proposed research model and the research hypotheses.

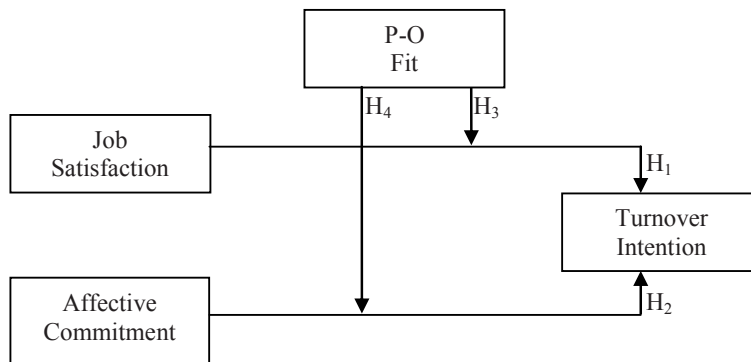


Figure 1. Research Model

### 3.4. Sample and Data Collection

A field research is conducted to collect data from a representative sample of academic and administrative staff working at higher education institutions in Turkey. Data is collected by an online questionnaire. An e-mail invitation containing the web-link of the online questionnaire is sent to e-mail addresses of 1247 academic and administrative staff working at 32 state universities in Turkey. 212 valid responses are collected from January 2012 to March 2013.

The online questionnaire consisted of several scales measuring the research constructs. Perceived person-organization fit was measured by 4 item measure developed by Cable and Judge (1996). Affective organizational commitment was measured by 9 items taken from the “Organizational Commitment Scale” (Meyer, Allen and Smith 1993). Job satisfaction was measured by “Global Job Satisfaction Scale”; a 6 item scale developed by Quinn and Shepard (1974). Turnover intention was measured using 4 items, adapted from Angle and Perry (1981) and Jenkins (1993). Examples of items include “I often think of quitting my current job”; “I am actively looking for a job with another company” and “I am planning on looking for a different job in a different organization within the next 12 months”. Affective commitment, job satisfaction and turnover intention scales were 5 point Likert type scales where 1= Completely Disagree, 5= Completely Agree.

### 3.5. Analyses and Results

A total of 212 individuals participated in this study by filling the online questionnaire. Responses to the online questionnaire are coded and entered into a SPSS spreadsheet in order to perform the data analyses. The mean age of subjects was 36,2 years (range:22-70; sd.=8.5) and 54% were male. 69% were married. 83% of the respondents had graduate education. The mean organizational tenure of the respondents is 8.9 years (range:1-38; sd.=6.8). The mean of their monthly income was 3028 TL. A vast majority of the respondents (195) were employed in public universities. Before testing the research hypotheses, we made some preliminary analyses to control the dimensionality and reliability of the scales. Scale dimensionality was controlled by principal component analysis. Principal component analysis with Varimax rotation and a factor extraction according to the mineigen criterion (i.e. all factors with eigenvalues of greater than 1) was employed. Scale reliability was assessed by internal consistency using Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient. Descriptive statistics showed that research data was appropriate for factor analysis (KMO= 0,936; Bartlett’s test of sphericity  $p<0,001$ ). Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, factor loadings and Cronbach Alpha coefficients for the scales.

Table 1. Scales Items, Descriptive Statistics and Principal Components Analysis Results

Scale Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Factor Loading	Cronbach Alpha
<b>Affective Organizational Commitment</b>				
I feel like 'part of my family' at this organization.	3,45	1,13	0,77	0,93
I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to this organization.	3,25	1,14	0,76	
I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.	3,44	1,13	0,75	
I feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization.	3,27	1,09	0,73	
I am proud to tell people that I am part of this institution.	3,83	0,96	0,68	
This organization deserves my loyalty.	3,03	1,14	0,66	
This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me	3,26	1,15	0,65	
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career in this organization	3,53	1,14	0,59	
I owe a great deal to this organization	3,12	1,17	0,56	
<b>Job Satisfaction</b>				
How does this job compare with your ideal job (job you would most like to have)?	3,59	1,11	0,83	0,90
In general how much do you like your job?	4,09	0,79	0,80	
All (in all) things considered, how satisfied are you with your current job?	3,55	0,99	0,72	
(Knowing what you know now) if you had to decide all over again whether to take job you know you now have what would you decide?	3,66	1,05	0,67	
(In General) How does your job measure up to the sort of the job you wanted when you took it?	3,31	1,10	0,64	
If a (good) friend asked if he/she should apply for a job like yours with your company, what would you recommend?	3,66	1,00	0,57	
<b>Turnover Intention</b>				
I am probably going to be working for another company in a year	2,14	1,16	-0,92	0,92
I am planning on looking for a different job in a different organization within the next 12 months	2,40	1,20	-0,89	
I am actively looking for a job with another company	2,11	1,14	-0,84	
I often think of quitting my current job	1,86	1,08	-0,75	
<b>Person-Organization Fit</b>				
To what extent do you feel your values match or fit this organization	3,30	1,10	0,80	0,92
To what extent do your organization's objectives reflect your own objectives?	3,54	1,10	0,76	
To what extent the personality of this organization reflect your own personality?	3,24	1,16	0,76	
To what extent your organization's values and culture provide a good fit with the things that you value in life?	3,60	1,11	0,74	

Principal components analysis revealed four factors as expected. Scale items are adequately loaded to relevant factors. Principal components analysis suggested a single factor for the “affective commitment scale”, which explained 65% of the total variance. All of the scale items loaded heavily on a single factor. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated as .93. Thus, a composite measure was created by averaging the responses on the nine items and named as “Commitment”. For the “job satisfaction scale”, principal components analysis suggested a single factor, which explained 67% of the total variance. All of the scale items loaded heavily on a single factor. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated as .90. Thus, a composite measure was created by averaging the responses on the six items and named as “Satisfaction”. Finally, principal components analysis suggested a single factor for turnover intention scale, which explained 81% of the total variance. All of the scale items loaded heavily on a single factor. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated as .92. Thus, a composite measure was created by averaging the responses on the six items and named as “Turnover”. For the “person organization fit scale”, principal components

analysis suggested a single factor, which explained 80% of the total variance. All of the scale items loaded heavily on a single factor. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated as .92. Thus, a composite measure was created by averaging the responses on the four items and named as "P-O Fit". Consequently, we computed four composite variables in order to be used to test the research hypotheses. The means, standard deviations, and interrelations of all variables are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations, and Interrelations of All Variables

	Mean	Std.	1	2	3
(1) Affective Commitment	3,35	0,89			
(2) Job Satisfaction	3,64	0,83	0,679(**)		
(3) Turnover Intention	2,13	1,03	-0,465(**)	-0,511(**)	
(4) Person Organization Fit	3,41	1,00	0,757(**)	0,598(**)	-0,414(**)

(\*\*)Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As seen in Table 2, correlations among all variables reveal that affective commitment and job satisfaction are significantly negatively related to turnover intentions ( $r = -0.465$ ,  $r = -0.511$  respectively;  $p < 0.001$ ). Further, person organization fit is found to be significantly positively correlated with affective commitment and job satisfaction, and significantly negatively correlated with turnover intention ( $r = 0.757$ ,  $r = 0.598$ ,  $r = -0.414$  respectively;  $p < 0.001$ ) and. Thus, our first hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) proposing that job satisfaction is significantly negatively related to turnover intention, and our second hypothesis ( $H_2$ ) proposing that affective commitment is significantly negatively related to turnover intention were supported.

Regression analyses are employed in order to test the moderation hypotheses ( $H_3$  and  $H_4$ ). Regression, with interaction terms of independent and moderator variables, is accepted as an appropriate method for moderation analyses (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Table 3 shows the analyses results for the first regression model. Job satisfaction exerts a significantly negative effect on turnover intention ( $\beta = -.511$ ;  $P < 0.001$ ). The second step of the regression analysis is constructed to see the moderating effect of P-O Fit on the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention. As seen in the table, the interaction term (Job Satisfaction \* P-O Fit) has a significantly positive effect on turnover intention ( $\beta = .242$ ;  $P < 0.001$ ). Thus, the data provides sufficient evidence to conclude a moderating effect of P-O Fit.  $H_3$  is also supported.

Table 3. Regression Analysis: Job Satisfaction and P-O Fit on Turnover Intention

Model	Independent Variable and The Moderator	Stand. $\beta$	t	Sig.	Adjusted $R^2$	F Value	Model Sig.
1	Job Satisfaction	-.511	-8,588	,000	,257	73,749	0,000
2	Job Satisfaction	-.332	-4,550	,000	,324	34,523	0,000
	P-O Fit	-.188	-2,657	,008			
	Job Satisfaction * P-O Fit	,242	4,085	,000			

Dependent Variable: Turnover Intention

Table 4 shows the analyses results for the second regression model. Affective commitment exerts a significantly negative effect on turnover intention ( $\beta = -.465$ ;  $P < 0.001$ ). The second step of the regression analysis is constructed to see the moderating effect of P-O Fit on the relationship between affective commitment and turnover intention. As seen in the table, the interaction term (Job Satisfaction \* P-O Fit) has a marginally significant effect on turnover intention ( $\beta = .105$ ;  $P = 0.095$ ). Thus, the data does not provide enough evidence to conclude a moderating effect of P-O Fit on the relationship between affective commitment and turnover intention.  $H_4$  is not supported.

Table 4. Regression Analysis: Affective Commitment and P-O Fit on Turnover Intention

Model	Independent Variable and Moderator	Stand. $\beta$	t	Sig.	Adjusted $R^2$	F Value	Model Sig.
1	Affective Commitment	-.465	-7,598	,000	,213	57,726	0,000
2	Affective Commitment	-.346	-3,681	,000	,224	21,228	0,000
	P-O Fit	-.124	-1,314	,190			
	Affective Commitment * P-O Fit	,105	1,676	,095			

Dependent Variable: Turnover Intention



#### 4. Conclusions

In this study, we examined the effects of job satisfaction and affective commitment on employees' turnover intentions. For this aim, we collected data from a convenience sample of employees working in the higher education industry. Participants' perceptions of the level of fit between their values and that of the organization they work for (P-O fit), their level of affective commitment, job satisfaction and intentions to leave are measured by multi item scales. Correlations among the variables are tested in order to understand the independent relation of each variable with turnover intentions. It is found that, affective commitment and job satisfaction are significantly negatively related to turnover intentions. Further; P-O Fit is found to be significantly positively correlated with affective commitment and job satisfaction. These findings are consistent with the previous research results depicting the negative relationships between turnover intentions and both affective organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Price and Mueller, 1981; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Cavanagh and Coffin, 1992, Chen & Spector, 1992; Hellman, 1997). These findings are also consistent with the literature documenting the positive relationship between P-O fit and affective commitment and job satisfaction (Boxx et al., 1991; Chatman, 1989, 1991; Meglino et al., 1989; O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991; Van Vianen, 2000; Tepeci and Barlett, 2002).

This study examined the potential moderating role of P-O fit, which may affect the direction and strength of the effects of job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment on turnover intention. Data analyses revealed a significant moderator effect of P-O Fit on the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention. P-O fit decreased the negative effect of job satisfaction on turnover intention. However, contrary to our proposition, results did not exert enough evidence to show the moderating effect of P-O fit on the relationships between affective organizational commitment and turnover intention. A possible explanation to this contradiction may be the sampling frame used in this study. Our sample consisted of employees working in state universities, and they are ultimately public servants. Further investigation of the issue within a new sampling frame consisted of private sector employees may provide a different insight. Thus, as a suggestion for future research, these findings needs to be further investigated and validated within other sampling frames covering different industries. In future research, other dimensions of organizational commitment (i.e., continuance and normative commitment) may also be examined in order to understand their impact on turnover intentions while controlling the effect of P-O fit. As another suggestion for future research, employee demographics and job related qualifications may also be included in the models, in order to understand whether there is any interaction with commitment, satisfaction and turnover intentions.

These results provide important managerial implications. They reconfirm the strong relationships between affective commitment, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. In order to enhance employee retention and decrease the likelihood of turnover, providing employees with satisfactory workplace condition is vital. Further, managers must develop an affective commitment among employees. Here, person organization fit plays an important role. As long as the employee perceives a good fit between his values and that of the organizations, he is more likely to be satisfied with the job. Thus, managers should develop a favorable corporate identity within the organization incorporating shared values that are congruent with the employees'.

The study has some limitations. First of all, it was conducted with the use of a convenience sample. There is a need to replicate this research with the use of more representative random samples. Future studies would gain external validity by using probability samples of wider populations. Further, this study is based on cross-sectional design and thus cannot make causal inferences. However, the results of our model provide some preliminary support depicting the moderating effect of P-O fit on the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover intention. Finally, replicating the study in different sectors both concerning the public and private ownership status and the type of industry may also provide deeper insights.

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